

## IV. SITE EVALUATION

### A. APPROACH

Not all Delaware farm sites that predate 1830 should be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Considerable archaeological work has now been done on farm and rural sites from that period, and much has been learned about these sites and what we can expect from them. Delaware's written records, in particular for the 1770 to 1830 period, are excellent, and historians have barely begun to explore their potential for the study of ordinary rural life. Not every site can give us significant information about the past that we do not already have or could not more easily get from documentary research.

To be considered eligible for listing in the National Register a site must possess integrity and meet one of the four established criteria. A definition of archaeological integrity is offered in Section D of this chapter. The National Register criteria are listed in Table 25. To date, all the rural sites that have been excavated in Delaware have been considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion D, because they may yield or have yielded significant information about the past. In principle, an archaeological site could be considered eligible under any of the criteria. Criteria A and B, relating to significant events and persons, depend on historical judgments somewhat beyond the scope of this document. Criterion C could apply to archaeological remains of very high integrity, such as building foundations, but no use has been made of this possibility in Delaware. An intact eighteenth-century farm landscape might be even more valuable, since the distinctive characteristics of an eighteenth-century farm would best be embodied by an entire farm landscape, including fields, woods, gardens, roads, and buildings. For reasons explained in Chapter III, very few authentic eighteenth-century farm landscapes survive in America, other than the homes of the highest of the elite. The preservation of rural landscapes in general, while an important topic, is not primarily an archaeological concern and is therefore beyond the scope of this document. It seems likely that for the foreseeable future most archaeological sites in Delaware will continue to be considered for eligibility under Criterion D.

Table 25. National Register Eligibility Criteria

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| A | Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   |
| B | Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  |
| C | Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. |
| D | Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.   |

*Source: 36 CFR 60*

The eligibility criteria for farm and rural dwelling sites should be tighter for more recent periods. For the period before 1720, so few sites have been investigated that almost any site with intact features would repay excavation. After 1720, however, many more sites survive, more have been excavated, and written documentation is more plentiful. Archaeology remains our chief means of studying many aspects of life in this period, including housing and the household economy,

especially for the years from 1720 to 1750. Most sites from this period with a reasonable degree of integrity (see below) will probably still be considered eligible. After 1750, and even more after 1790, the increasing availability of other kinds of documents and the increasing number of surviving sites limit the need to excavate every site encountered. For the early nineteenth century, many more standing structures survive, including some barns and other outbuildings, and the written records become increasingly rich. The written records for this period, discussed in Chapter I, include Orphans' Court descriptions of farms and other properties, probate inventories, wills, estate documents, tax records, storekeepers' accounts, business papers, newspaper advertisements, legal cases, and a variety of other forms. The number of topics that can be addressed in detail only through archaeology declines. There is no cutoff date beyond which excavation of a farm or rural dwelling site ceases to be valuable, but the integrity requirements should be increasingly strict as we move toward the present.

## B. RESEARCH CONTEXT

One of the main purposes of a historic context is to describe the research issues that animate a field of study and the kinds of archaeological remains that may help in answering the questions that are formulated. Knowledge of the research concerns is essential in determining eligibility for the National Register under Criterion D, because it enables us to recognize which data are more likely to be truly important. A glance at the research questions that have been discussed in reports on eighteenth-century Delaware sites shows that a "research question" can focus on several different kinds, or levels, of analysis. Consider this two-part question, posed by the excavators of the Charles Allen House (Basilik et al. 1988):

Are changes in artifact distributions present and do they indicate changing spatial utilization? Can such changes in patterns be related to historically documented economic and social changes in the surrounding area?

The first part of the question focuses narrowly on the archaeological data the excavators expect to recover from the site, while the second part reaches beyond the site to "historically documented economic and social changes." The other research questions proposed to date by Delaware archaeologists also show this dichotomy. Some proposed questions have focused on technical and purely archaeological issues, and others address broad issues derived from the historical discourse, such as the impact of the early nineteenth-century agricultural crisis on tenant households (De Cunzio and Garcia 1992:275-288).

In a recent interview, Lewis Binford distinguished two approaches to archaeology (Thurman 1998). One approach, according to Binford, is to focus on the archaeological record and study "problems that arise from comparative study of the archaeological record, and in the recognition of patterning there." The second approach is to use the archaeological record to study questions that derive from other disciplines; Binford gives the example of gender issues, and he imagines an archaeologist asking "What is the role of gender in the past?" (Thurman 1998:46-47). One does not have to accept Binford's strong prejudice against the latter approach to see that there is a difference between these two kinds of questions. In the first, we examine the archaeological data, describe it precisely, look for regularities or anomalies within it, and refer to historical documentation only to explain things

first noticed in the ground. In the second, we steep ourselves in the historical or anthropological literature, identify a question that interests us—gender, race, political change—and then scan the archaeological data for evidence that pertains to our interest.

Another way to consider archaeological research questions is to distinguish between description of the past and explanation or interpretation of the past. A similar distinction was made by De Cunzo and Catts (1990), who assert that *reconstructing* the past must precede higher-level analysis. Delaware archaeologist Edward Heite has recently given a spirited defense of antiquarianism, that is, the simple gathering of knowledge, as a valid approach to archaeology; as he put it, antiquarians consider “the study of old things a perfectly legitimate enterprise in itself” (Heite and Blume 1998:17). To Heite, people who collect buttons or assemble genealogies are contributing to our historical knowledge just as surely as “orthodox” scholars are, and, in fact, their contributions may still be of use long after changing intellectual fashions have rendered legions of serious scholarly books obsolete. It is often asserted, and may well be true, that there is no such thing as pure description, or description without interpretation. However, there is certainly an important difference of degree between a question like “Did the use of space on the Charles Allen Site change over time?” and “Did eighteenth-century Delaware farmers participate in a ‘consumer revolution’ that radically altered their attitudes toward material objects?”

This document therefore considers the description of life in the eighteenth century as a research goal in its own right, as well as a necessary background for the study of other topics. The more theoretical topics that have animated recent research are also discussed. This overview is not intended to cover all possible topics, simply those that have driven archaeological research in Delaware in the past and continue to do so in the present.

### 1. *The Reconstruction of Past Lifeways*

One of the central questions for a historical archaeologist is also the simplest: What was life like in the past? Many of the issues archaeologists consider are crucial to achieving a fully imagined picture of any society. How can we imagine people’s lives without knowing what kinds of houses they lived in, or what they ate? To imagine people at work, we have to know what tools they used; to imagine them at dinner, we have to know something about the dishes they ate from. Learning details of these kinds about people’s lives is in itself an important historical goal. This knowledge also provides the indispensable background to the more theoretical questions that follow. The main areas within which archaeology has contributed to our concrete knowledge of daily life in the past are discussed in Chapter III.

### 2. *Domestic Economy*

Archaeologists tend to have a materialist orientation—that is, they usually focus first on the economic and technological foundations of society. It is these, after all, that tend to leave material remains, whereas philosophy and myth often do not. The first question raised in De Cunzo and Catts’s *Management Plan for Delaware’s Historical Archaeological Resources* (1990) focuses on the material basis of life in the household, called by them “Domestic Economy.” In the eighteenth-century economy, most households, and especially most rural households, were sites of production

as well as consumption. Both on their farms and in their houses, people raised or made many things that they used themselves, raised or made other things that they sold into the wider economy, and used or consumed things that they purchased. To understand the economy of an eighteenth-century household we must study it as both a unit of production and a unit of consumption.

*a. Domestic Production and Income Strategy*

Within the boundaries of the eighteenth-century rural economy, people could make many different choices about how to produce or acquire the things they needed. The choices made by the members of each household are referred to as their “income strategy.” Most basically, people could choose to make for themselves as many as they could of the things they needed, emphasizing self-sufficiency, or they could concentrate on producing goods to sell for money (or working for wages). For larger farmers, wheat, butter, live cattle, and smoked pork were the prime saleable goods. Many other items, however, could also be sold: eggs, cheese, wool, hides, furs, geese, turkeys, dried peaches, flax, flaxseed, beeswax, honey, cider, brandy, and venison hams (De Cunzo et al. 1992; Jensen 1986). Forest products, especially lumber and barrel staves, were important income earners for many farmers, and became important exports from North America. Historical research indicates that in New Castle County, larger farmers were highly commercialized by 1770, but that commercialization was slower to penetrate Kent and Sussex counties (Main 1965). However, even a commercially oriented eighteenth-century farm produced much more for home consumption than a modern household, including meat, eggs, firewood, and vegetables.

Among the goods that some rural families chose to produce at home were soap, vinegar, leather, and especially cloth and clothing. Studies of probate inventories show that a minority of families were equipped for complete cloth production (Jensen 1986; Shammass 1982). In New Castle and Kent counties, only 10 to 20 percent of rural households owned a loom (Bedell et al. 2001, 2002; also see Chapter I). Spinning wheels were quite common, however, and most households also had some equipment for growing flax or wool. Many households, it seems, were involved in the production of yarn, but relatively few in the weaving of cloth (Hood 1996; Ulrich 1998). Much homespun yarn was probably used for knitting stockings, a common activity of older women in particular (Jensen 1986). Other yarn was sent out to professional weavers, or was sold. How much attention to devote to the various kinds of home manufacturing was an important decision to be made in each household.

For poorer families, wage labor might be necessary to make ends meet, and each family had to decide how much of their time should be spent working for others and how much should be spent around their own farm or garden. Even some slave families had choices to make, since their owners allowed them to cultivate gardens and raise animals.

The choices made in each household about where to exert their productive energies depended on the number, gender, and ages of the household’s members. Each household went through what we call a life cycle, and the amount and kind of work done varied across the lives of the householders. One document that provides a very clear picture of the household life cycle is the diary kept by Martha Ballard, a midwife who lived in Maine and kept a careful record of her life between 1785 and 1812 (Ulrich 1988, 1990). When Ballard’s daughters were teenagers, she was the head of an impressive productive apparatus. Under her direction, her daughters spun the family’s own thread, wove their

cloth, sewed their clothes, knitted their stockings, and stitched their quilts; they also made butter and cheese, tended a large garden and a flock of poultry, and took in washing from the neighbors. As her daughters grew to maturity and married, the aging Ballard had to curtail her activities. She gave her loom to a daughter, sold off some of her cows, and slowly reduced the number and kinds of things made in her house.

Not everyone in rural Delaware was a farmer. Several kinds of craftsmen are documented in the written records, including carpenters, coopers, weavers, tailors, tanners, and blacksmiths (Bedell et al. 2002; De Cunzo et al. 1992:54). Some of these people worked on a trade in the slack periods of the farming year (Simler 1986), but others made it a full-time profession; many of these full-time craftsmen, however, also raised a few animals or cultivated a patch of flax. The archaeology of rural life includes the archaeology of these craftsmen/farmers, and the study of rural domestic economies must include the place of craft production.

The archaeological evidence of household production is actually rather meager, and many important activities have not left any detectable remains. Sheep bones are almost the only evidence we have of wool production, and we have none at all of linen. A few seeds are all we have found of the ubiquitous gardens. No loom weights or other evidence of weaving have been found, nor has anyone found the remains of a cider press or a still. It is difficult even to imagine how some important activities might be identified archaeologically, including keeping bees and cutting barrel staves. Archaeology has little to tell us about the most important productive activity in rural Delaware, farming, although the study of faunal remains can give us much information about stock raising. One activity that can be identified is butter production; the very wide distribution of earthenware milk pans and crocks shows that dairying was very common in Delaware.

Some home production activities may leave chemical residues that can be detected by analysis of soil chemistry. Heite and Blume noted high concentrations of phosphorus and calcium in a series of basin pits ringing the Bloomsbury Site, and they speculated that these pits might have been used in extracting lye from ashes, in soap-making, or in the early stages of tanning. At the Augustine Creek South Site, extraordinarily high calcium, phosphorus, and strontium levels were found in a group of pits in the possible cloth manufacturing area, suggesting to the excavators that the pit fills might be residues from cloth processing, or perhaps from the manufacture of pearl ash or vegetable dye. However, little is known about the chemical signatures that would have been left by various eighteenth-century industrial processes. Some of the same ingredients were used in several of them (lye, lime, urine, and ashes were common), further complicating any interpretations. At this time the chemical detection of eighteenth-century home industry shows promise but is far from an exact tool.

At least three eighteenth-century craftsmen have been studied archaeologically in Delaware. Benjamin Wynn was a blacksmith who lived on a tenant farm near Dover between 1765 and 1800, and archaeologists found his forge and other remains of metalworking. Samuel and Henrietta Mahoe, owners of the Augustine Creek South Site between 1726 and 1755, were identified in documents as weavers. The excavators of that site identified a separate industrial area, including a 14x24-foot building and several pits containing ashy soil, but no evidence that would have conclusively identified the industrial activity as cloth manufacture. Numerous pieces of shoe leather

and several shoemaker's needles were found in one of the wells at the Bloomsbury Site. On the other hand, no archaeological evidence of shoemaking was found at the Thomas Williams Site, even though one of the documented tenants is known to have been a shoemaker, and no trace was found of the "malt house" shown on a surveyor's sketch of Thomas Dawson's farm.

Two activities that are much better documented archaeologically than in the written records are hunting and fishing. Wild animal bones have been found on all of the Delaware sites with usable faunal collections, showing that hunting and fishing were common activities. Wild animals did not provide a very large percentage of the meat consumed on any site, with the possible exception of the John Powell Plantation. Even there, pork and beef were by far the most common meats. No distinct patterns of variation in wild food use have been noted to date.

*b. Consuming*

Despite the protestations of those spokesmen for American self-sufficiency who were so active around the time of the Revolutionary War, no Delaware farm family could provide for themselves everything they required (Appleby 1982; Shammass 1982). They needed metal tools and pots, ceramic dishes, hooped barrels, and other things only a well-equipped professional could produce. Most purchased cloth and shoes. Historians have long debated how far beyond these purchases of essential goods American farmers went: did they strive for independence, or did they avidly pursue the acquisition of consumer goods (Henretta 1978; Kulikoff 1989; Rothenberg 1981; Sellers 1991)? No doubt people then as now varied a great deal in the strength of their acquisitiveness, but a majority of historians and most archaeologists now see the eighteenth century as a time of considerable consumerism (Carson 1994; McKendrick 1982).

One of the most important new articles of consumption was tea. Some psychologically oriented historians have linked many of the differences between modern and medieval societies to the replacement of alcohol with caffeine as the drug of choice for many people (Biziére 1979). Furthermore, tea was not simply drunk, but was "taken," in an elaborate and formal way. This somewhat pretentious social activity, which required specialized dishes, is one of the prime symbols of consumption in the period, and equipment for drinking tea has been found on all of the Delaware sites dating to after 1740. Most teawares, even on sites occupied by poorer people, are fine, decorated dishes. Other signs of a taste for consumption include gilt buttons, cuff links with paste "stones," jewelry, knives and forks with inlaid or engraved handles, and stemmed drinking glasses, all of which have been found on Delaware archaeological sites.

Certain important historical questions about changes in consumer behavior are covered below, but in this context some points should be made. The purchase of consumer goods required the earning of income, so the enjoyment of tea and fine clothes required the orientation of the household economy toward cash earnings. Decisions about how to direct the household's efforts were determined in part by how greatly its members desired purchased consumer goods. To say that most eighteenth-century people did purchase some nonutilitarian consumer goods is not to say that they all desired the same goods, or desired them to the same extent. Poorer people, of course, did not have the same options as the well-off, and even superficially similar artifacts on rich and poor sites may have been acquired in different ways. For example, better-off people usually bought ceramics

in matching sets, while poorer people bought theirs one piece at a time, perhaps second hand, resulting in unmatched collections. Other strong differences in consumer habits have not yet been documented for rural people in Delaware, but such differences probably existed and the search for them should be continued. There may be ethnic differences, and there ought to be regional differences, since New Castle County and northern Kent County were more highly commercialized than southern Delaware. Strong differences should also exist over time, since Delaware experienced periods of rapid economic growth (especially during the 30 years prior to 1775) and deep economic depression (especially in the early 1800s, when Delaware's population fell in many years). Consumption also varied over the household life-cycle, just as production did. All of these variations in consumer behavior provide fertile ground for archaeological research.

### 3. *Culture and Ethnicity*

#### a. *Culture and Environment*

The relationship between culture and environment has always been prominent in the study of American history. Historians have long wondered how much of the culture brought from home by the early European immigrants to America was maintained in the New World, and how much the immigrants changed their ways to adapt to their new surroundings. The debate surrounding this question continues today (Baily 1986; Carson 1994; Fischer 1989; Greene 1988; Mouer 1993).

Archaeological data to study the relationship of culture and environment come from studies of site location, architecture, and the bones of both wild and domestic animals. Where people choose to build, or have to build, their houses depends on their relationship with their environment, as does the form of the structures they construct (Linebaugh 1994). At the McKean/Cochran Farm near Odessa (Bedell et al. 1999) this issue was raised by a peculiar dairy building, built like a springhouse—but on a site without a spring. Central Delaware makes a fascinating laboratory for the study of this relationship, because although it is topographically very similar to the Chesapeake region, it was culturally much closer to Pennsylvania (Glassie 1968). People's relationship with their environment obviously includes the exploitation of wild foods, and stock-raising practices can also be considered in this light.

#### b. *Development of a Regional, Delaware Valley Culture*

For many folklorists, the most important differences within American culture are regional. In the eastern United States, historians have identified five important cultural regions: the North, the Middle Atlantic, the Midwest, the Upland South (Appalachia), and the Lowland South, which includes the Chesapeake (Fischer 1989; Glassie 1968). The differences among these regions may be seen in the forms of houses and barns, music and the instruments used to make it, marriage practices, speech patterns, clothes, and the usual way of making things, from fences to chairs. Northern and central Delaware belong firmly to the culture of the Middle Atlantic region, which developed in the Delaware Valley and is distinguished by a mixture of British and German cultural traits. The clearest archaeological evidence of Delaware's regional affiliation are the slip-decorated pans and pie plates and other locally made ceramics. These traditional vessels remained very common in Delaware into the early 1800s, but they had completely disappeared from the Chesapeake

region by 1800, emphasizing the cultural difference between the two regions (Bedell et al. 1999). The documented differences were found for all types of sites, including those occupied by wealthy farmers, poor tenants, great planters such as Thomas Jefferson, and slaves. The artifacts show that these regional cultures did have a real impact on how people lived, and that these cultural divisions cut across lines of race and class. The data suggest that these cultural differences developed in the course of the eighteenth century and were more pronounced at its end than at its beginning. Other regional differences between the Delaware Valley and the Chesapeake have been documented, for example, in the locations chosen for building houses (Fithian 1994). Since many Delaware planters came from Maryland, it would be interesting to compare sites occupied by immigrants from the Chesapeake region with those occupied by people who were born in Delaware, or who immigrated through Philadelphia, to see if some Delaware residents maintained a lifestyle more like that of the Chesapeake. Other approaches to studying the regional culture of the Delaware Valley may become possible through further excavation.

*c. Ethnicity*

In the United States, race and ethnicity are among the central concerns of all the social sciences. One might even argue that the central question about America, to social scientists of all types, is whether we should speak of a single American culture or of many separate cultures. Are we Americans, or are we European Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans? Is that person a European American, or perhaps an Irish American, Italian American, or British American? These questions suffuse the scholarly discourse and reach far beyond it, into debates about language, education, entertainment, national holidays, and even the way census forms should be designed. It follows, of course, that ethnicity and race have been central concerns of historical archaeologists, who have struggled to understand the role of race and ethnicity in our past and how that past controls or influences what we do in the present.

Colonial Delaware was a multi-ethnic society. One of the reasons archaeologists have been so eager to discover sites from the early Swedish and Dutch periods is that the study of sites occupied by the different European groups would provide an opportunity for an exercise in “comparative colonialism” (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). No such early sites have been found, and historical documents indicate that by 1730 the Dutch and Swedes had been assimilated with their British neighbors and had largely lost their distinctive cultures. Archaeologists working on eighteenth-century sites have yet to find evidence that any of Delaware’s European groups (Swedish, Dutch, English, Scots-Irish, Welsh, German, or Huguenot) maintained a distinctive material culture, but differences in housing or foodways may be found in the future.

Greater differences separated Delaware’s white settlers, as a group, from American Indians and African or Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Most of the American Indians who had resided in Delaware before 1638 had moved west or had died of European diseases, but a substantial group remained. Unable to practice their native way of life, they adopted many European ways, particularly in their material culture. They built European-style houses, used iron tools and earthenware dishes, and became tenant farmers on the lands of Europeans. They have survived continuously in Delaware down to the present. They have sometimes been called mulattoes or “moors,” and their white neighbors have told stories about their descent from Spaniards or Africans, but they have always

insisted that they were Indians. Modern research has confirmed their Native American identity. One site occupied by eighteenth-century American Indians, Bloomsbury, has been excavated in Delaware, and the report on that site includes a thorough discussion of the history of these groups (Heite and Blume 1998). The artifacts from the site included coarse and refined ceramics, tin cups, farm tools, sewing implements, and buttons, similar to what one would expect on a site of this period (ca. 1761-1814) occupied by white tenants. The excavators did find several pieces of glass that might have been worked into tools, and four blue beads that may have been buried at the corners of a house—although no other evidence of a house survived.

Delaware had a substantial African American population in the period under study. The 1800 census lists 14,421 “colored persons”; the category included both blacks and Indians, but a majority of the “colored” population was black. At that time a majority of the blacks in Delaware were free, and the percentage who were free continued to increase thereafter. No documented black-occupied site dating to before 1830 has been excavated in Delaware. The excavators of the Augustine Creek North Site speculated that this site might have had African American residents in the 1790 to 1810 period, but there was no written evidence of black occupation and no clear indications of ethnic affiliation in the artifacts recovered. Slaves may have lived in the kitchen/quarter structure at the William Strickland Plantation, and it is possible that the dairy at the McKean/Cochran Farm was occupied by slaves, or recently freed blacks, between 1820 and 1840. However, there was no clear archaeological evidence of either of these hypotheses, and no artifact deposits could be associated with the occupants of either structure. The discovery of a documented black-occupied farm site from before 1830 remains an important goal. The excavation of such a site could provide very important information, because the written record of Delaware’s African Americans is sparse and tells us little about their daily lives (Livesay 1968; Williams 1996).

The archaeology of race is a large and contentious topic, but most work has focused on the plantation cultures of the South and the Caribbean, or on urban contexts (Ferguson 1992; Singleton 1985). Little has been published on the archaeology of African Americans in rural Delaware or Pennsylvania before 1830. Work in other regions has shown that it is possible to identify a specifically African American material culture. Some Africans brought with them their own distinctive ways of building and making things and did maintain them in the New World (Vlach 1978). Buildings have been identified in the South and even in New England that were constructed according to African designs (Deetz 1977; Vlach 1986). African artistic motifs have been identified on pottery and tobacco pipes made in Virginia and the Carolinas (Emerson 1994; Ferguson 1992). Archaeological evidence of magical practices based on African precedents has also been found on many Southern sites (Wilkie 1997).

In the eighteenth century, hundreds of African-born slaves were imported into Delaware. Written records describe men who spoke no English, practiced African religions, and bore such names as Congamachu and Auyuba Suleiman (Williams 1996). However, no clear indications of surviving African material culture have been identified in the state. African-born slaves were generally dispersed into small groups and lived closely with their white owners, a circumstance which made the preservation of their culture difficult. When the Africans’ children or grandchildren were freed to set up their own households, as many of Delaware’s slaves had been by 1800, their ties to Africa were weak. Of course, the absence of specifically African material culture does not mean that

Delaware's African Americans did not have distinctive lifeways. Much of African American culture developed in the new world as a response to the conditions in which Africans and their descendants found themselves. Some of these conditions, including racism, poverty, political oppression, and the denial of formal education, existed in Delaware just as in the South, and so, no doubt, did many of the same cultural responses. Even if Delaware's blacks did use objects similar or identical to those used by whites, they may nevertheless have had their own material culture. The ways objects are used, and the meanings assigned to them by their users, are key parts of material culture, and there are many reasons for thinking that some objects were viewed quite differently by African Americans than by whites (Wilkie 1997; Yentsch 1994).

The excavation of black-occupied Delaware sites dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has not, to date, provided any substantial evidence of distinctly African American lifeways. The black occupants of the Thomas Williams and Jacob B. Cazier Tenancy sites were poor, like most blacks in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Delaware, and their poverty was visible archaeologically (Catts and Custer 1990; Hoseth et al. 1994). However, it seems that these poor blacks lived in houses similar to those occupied by poor whites, ate similar foods, and used similar tools and dishes. If documentary evidence identifying the sites' occupants as black were not available, we might not have known their ethnic identity. The problem is a general one in the Middle Atlantic region, since there are no rigorous criteria for distinguishing sites occupied by African Americans from sites occupied by European Americans. Many of Delaware's African Americans before 1830 were slaves, and the nature of slavery in Delaware raises further difficulties. Most Delaware slave owners had no more than five slaves, and many had only one. Instead of residing on remote quarters, most of these people lived either in the same house as their masters, or in a kitchen or other nearby outbuilding, making it very difficult to separate their artifacts from those of other members of the household (Williams 1996:103). We know that some of the artifacts we find would have been used by the enslaved residents of the site, but we do not know which ones. It might be interesting to compare sites where the households included African American slaves with sites containing all-white households, to see if any consistent differences could be discerned.

Because the kind of documentation that has been used to identify black tenant farmers in the nineteenth century is rare for the eighteenth century, the problem of identifying black eighteenth-century sites will remain difficult. Perhaps recognition of that very difficulty is an important discovery, since many slave-quarter sites have been identified in the Deep South, and some differences have been noted between the artifacts from slave and white sites (Otto 1984). It is sometimes possible, however, to identify eighteenth-century tenants, and to determine their race, so tenant sites occupied by African Americans may still be documented. Tax records mention "Negro quarter" sites as well, so a slave residence might also be identified. Because of the great limitations of the written record for studying African American life, and because of the importance of race and ethnicity in many contemporary scholarly debates, such sites should be given a high priority.

#### 4. *Modernization*

##### a. *From Frontier to Settled Land*

De Cunzo and Catts's *Management Plan for Delaware's Historic Archaeological Resources* (1990) emphasizes that a key goal of research on the 1730 to 1770 period is "to illuminate the transition of the colony from a frontier to a commercial agricultural hinterland." Because the eighteenth century was a time of rather rapid change within settled areas, the major challenge in studying this topic is to disentangle the thread representing the taming of the frontier from within the skein of other, parallel developments. To do this it is necessary to make comparisons between long-settled and newly settled areas. In Duck Creek Hundred, a boom occurred in the building of brick houses in the period around 1800 (De Cunzo et al. 1992:41). Is it the year 1800 that is important here, or is it more important that the boom in building took place 75 years after settlement of the area? Only a comparison of Duck Creek Hundred with other areas settled at different times can provide the answer. Certainly, all discussion of other factors causing change in the eighteenth century must include this important dimension, and assertions of social transformation must take into account the inevitable changes that took place within each district as it was cleared, planted, and civilized.

##### b. *The Creation of the Modern World*

One of the main goals of eighteenth-century archaeology has been and continues to be to test theories of revolutionary change in the eighteenth century. Although Lewis Binford has recently criticized the idea that the purpose of historical archaeology is to study the creation of the modern world (Thurman 1998), issues of modernization and change have been and remain absolutely central to the discipline. Increasingly rapid change, after all, is a fact of the record, not just a concept dragged in from documentary history, and we cannot pursue historical archaeology without attempting to understand those changes. Archaeology provides a vital perspective on eighteenth-century social change in part because it is democratic. Even for the late eighteenth century, most written records come from members of the elite, or derive from institutions (law courts, tax offices) controlled by them. Archaeologists can find and excavate sites occupied by ordinary people who wrote little or nothing. It is easy to find out from written records what political leaders and social critics thought people ought to do, but much harder to find out how ordinary people regarded these pronouncements. We can, though, excavate the homes of people from every social station, and every ethnicity, and every profession, and try to understand the way they reacted to the great changes going on in the eighteenth-century world.

##### 1) *The Consumer Revolution*

When historians and sociologists describe modern society, and distinguish it from the society of other times, they often point to the importance of consumption. We are consumers, defined to a great extent by what we buy. Pondering the role of consumer choice in our society naturally leads us to wonder how important it was in past societies. Most people have at least a vague idea that consumer choice was less important in the past, if for no other reason than that there were fewer consumer goods to choose among. If this is true, when did consumerism, in the way we know it, arise? Was it a revolutionary change, or a very long and slow process? What impact did it have on

other areas of life? These questions have inspired much debate and a large body of scholarship, but we are nowhere near being able to answer them. Historians have placed the origins of modern consumer society in the sixteenth century, the eighteenth century, at the end of the nineteenth century, and in the 1920s, and beyond this basic disagreement about the date lies more profound disagreement about the meaning and importance of these changes (see the discussion in Shammas 1989).

Most important for our purposes is the large body of recent scholarship, summarized by Carson (1994), that points to the eighteenth century as the key period for development of the modern consumer culture. According to this view, it was in the years between 1650 and 1800 that household objects such as dishes and furniture first became a key component of the average person's social status and self-definition. In traditional European society, these scholars argue, status was largely determined by a family's wealth in land and livestock, the value of which their neighbors all knew. By 1800, status was generally judged by a new definition of proper behavior that rested largely on a person's skill in using certain household objects. The tea ceremony and a new way of dining, around oval tables with forks and matching sets of dishes, are the best examples of this new relationship between status and household objects. The objects were, not just tools, but media for communicating messages about the people who used them (Bedell and Scharfenberger 2000; Wobst 1977). The great importance attached to these rather simple things led to the culture of mass consumerism we live with today, and sparked a demand for mass-produced goods that helped ignite the industrial revolution. A great rise in advertising and other marketing techniques helped fuel the consumption boom, along the way bringing us such new forms of literature as the newspaper and the fashion magazine (McKendrick 1982). This "consumer revolution" spread Georgian canons of order and beauty, derived from the classical revival in elite circles which we usually call the Renaissance, to ordinary people, and their local artistic and craft traditions were swamped by a tide of classically inspired, mass-produced, cleverly advertised, and internationally recognized fashion.

Consider, for example, the new dining habits. When these changes were introduced, in the later 1600s, they were associated exclusively with the rich. After 1720, however, the new dining equipment and the knowledge of how to use it spread rapidly among the middle and even the lower orders. Tea drinking, in particular, was taken up by millions of ordinary people, thanks in part to the falling prices of tea, sugar, and porcelain brought about by improvements in shipping and the growth of world trade. Studies of probate inventories have shown that by 1800 at least half of households in the British colonies owned tea-drinking equipment, and archaeological results suggest that the number was even higher (Carr and Walsh 1980, 1988, 1994; Main 1988; Walsh 1992). All of the Delaware sites dating to after the 1740s yielded sherds of teacups. People appear to have spent as much as they could afford on their tea sets. Their teacups were often much finer dishes than their plates or bowls, and the better dishes archaeologists find on the average late eighteenth-century farm site are almost always parts of tea sets. Tea drinking was, as Lorena Walsh (1992:239) has written, "the primary way the poor could participate in the rising culture of respectability." The wealthy responded to the spread of refined dining by developing ever more elaborate sets of dishes and protocols for their use, leading in the later nineteenth century to grandiose table settings with pickle forks, shrimp forks, cream soup bowls, sugar tongs, and dozens of other specialized implements.

## 2) *The Georgian Mindset and Personal Discipline*

The “consumer revolution” is only one way historians have imagined the allegedly transforming changes of the eighteenth century. Another conception emphasizes the development, in Europe, of new intellectual and social norms; in Britain and America these ideas are usually referred to as “Georgian,” following the influential writings of James Deetz (1977). To Deetz, the introduction of the “Georgian mindset” was nothing less than the end of the medieval, communal approach to life and the beginning of our modern, individualistic society. Georgian ideas emphasized order, cleanliness, privacy, and the separation of public and private spheres. Private life became more important, interaction with the neighbors less so. The term is adopted from an architectural style, and changes in housing were an important part of the development. Under the influence of the new norms, the better-off white people of America remade their houses and farms to provide a more orderly and private existence. In traditional European houses, even those of kings, sleeping, eating, and entertaining had been conducted in the same spaces. Dissatisfied with this arrangement, the rich began constructing separate bedrooms, dining rooms, and parlors. Privies, unknown in rural contexts from the seventeenth century, were dug, and small sheds were built over them to allow privacy. While the interiors of houses were changing to provide greater privacy, the exteriors were reshaped to provide a proper presentation of the owner’s wealth and status. The Georgian facade, with its perfect balance and grand scale, was an almost philosophical statement of the order of the universe and the owner’s role as an upholder of that order.

Deetz’s work has been taken up and extended by a group of scholars associated with Annapolis, Maryland, who see the changes in eighteenth-century personal habits as symptoms of a broad shift in western society toward a more disciplined way of life (Leone 1988; Shackel 1993; Shackel and Little 1994). The material corollaries of this new discipline include dishes and tea sets, which represent a more meticulous way of eating, as well as clocks, which impose tight control on the use of time, scientific instruments, which represent the imposition of law on nature, formal gardens and grid street plans, which bring rigid order to the landscape, and toothbrushes and chamber pots, which represent the imposition of discipline on the body. Paul Shackel, one of the leading theorists of this school, explicitly relates his ideas to Michel Foucault’s work on prisons; according to Foucault, prisons represent an attempt to impose a discipline favorable to the upper class on the criminal elements and the poor (Foucault 1978). We are thus led to imagine that the 1650 to 1800 period saw a great change in the western world, from a rather lax medieval society in which work was task-oriented, table manners atrocious, towns random in form, and criminals out of control, to a tightly disciplined modern society governed by the police, the clock, the surveyor’s sextant, and the etiquette book. This “Georgian revolution” rests essentially on the same data as the “consumer revolution,” viewed through different ideological filters. It is interesting to note that while Carson and Shackel both believe that the cultures of the rich and poor grew closer together in the eighteenth century, Carson sees this as evidence that the poor were striving to imitate the rich as best they could, while Shackel believes that the rich were forcing the poor to behave in ways useful to their betters.

### *c. Evaluating Claims of Revolutionary Change*

Substantial claims are made for the importance of social change in the 1650 to 1800 period. On the one hand, these changes reflect a major shift in the way people conceived of their society, related to

their neighbors, learned how to do their work, even thought about their bodily functions; on the other hand, these changes caused yet further developments, most importantly the industrial revolution. The claims, if correct, therefore seem to justify the notion of a social revolution in the eighteenth century. But a close evaluation of these claims suggests that they cannot be accepted uncritically (Bedell 2001). Examined in the wider context of Western history, the rise of consumerism and personal discipline are but parts of much broader social changes that took centuries to develop.

The main theorists under discussion here, Carson (1994) and Shackel (1993; Shackel and Little 1994), both tend to isolate the changes in eighteenth-century consumption from other changes in the society and to assign prominence to consumer behavior even when other factors have traditionally been seen as more important. Neither of these writers says much about the Renaissance, which seems a striking omission in works about the transformation of early modern Europe. If, as Carson maintains, the visible marks of status ceased to be lands and jewels and came to be a refined way of behaving, the classical education emphasized by humanist intellectuals is surely one of the most important parts of that new code, and the rise of the university education as a marker of gentility deserves mention alongside furniture and table manners (Bush 1939; Elias 1978). New standards of taste, which led to the redesign of houses and furniture, were also inspired by Renaissance classicism, and grid street plans were copied from Roman models. The introduction of the Renaissance to the discussion takes us back to the fourteenth century, greatly stretching the time frame of these “revolutionary” changes.

Social discipline has long been one of the major themes of Renaissance historians, and Shackel has only scratched the surface of this vast topic. The Protestant Reformation has often been seen as a quest for a disciplined church, especially as practiced by John Calvin, John Knox, and their Puritan followers (McNeill 1967; Schilling 1981; Strauss 1978). The modern army, with its uniforms, matched weaponry, system of rank, and regular drill, was an invention of this period, developed by men who wanted to recreate an ancient Roman or Spartan standard of military discipline (Oestreich 1982). The stoics, the ancient philosophers who emphasized personal discipline over all else, were widely read and quoted in this period (Allen 1957). Modern athletics, which can be seen as another way of disciplining the body, also developed greatly in this period, often under the influence of classical models. These issues take us from Martin Luther’s Ninety-five Theses (1519) to the renewal of the Olympics (1896), again greatly stretching the time frame of the revolution.

Certainly it is true that contemporary Americans and Europeans are much more devoted to privacy than their medieval predecessors were, and spend much more time alone. It is not clear that this change in attitude and behavior took place mainly in the eighteenth century, or that it is related in any simple way to consumerism or Georgian architecture. Important changes in the housing of ordinary Europeans began in the 1400s or even the 1300s. Prior to that time the most common house type in northwestern Europe was a one-room “hall house” with a hearth in the center and a smoke hole in the roof. The changes introduced at the end of the middle ages included the building of chimneys, the division of larger houses into two rooms (“hall-parlor”), the installation of the first glass windows, the construction of ceilings and lofts, and the division of those lofts into separate sleeping chambers (Hoskins 1953). Increasing the privacy of the master and mistress of the household seems to have been one of the main purposes of these changes. It was once believed that in England these new houses were mainly built in a relatively short time, a “great rebuilding,” but

more careful studies have shown that the replacement of the medieval housing stock was carried out over more than 400 years. Over the 1350 to 1750 period, the rate of new construction generally tracked economic conditions (Machin 1977). In some parts of Europe people and animals had traditionally slept under the same roof, the cows helping to keep the humans warm; in accordance with the trend toward increasing segmentation of life, these combined structures were mostly replaced with separate houses and barns. In the Low Countries, many new-style houses were built in the 1500s, but the replacement was not complete until around 1750 (De Vries 1975). Georgian houses were even more segmented than these late medieval houses, but the trend toward increasing privacy did not stop with the Georgian style; in contemporary America many houses provide separate bedrooms even for small children.

Carson also asserts that the “consumer revolution” led to a great rise in demand for consumer goods and therefore caused the industrial revolution, but this equation suffers from a mismatch between the commodities important to the two developments. The objects Carson emphasizes are houses, furniture, dishes, and cutlery. Although the form of houses and furniture certainly changed in the 1650 to 1800 period, the way they were made, by hand labor with simple tools, did not. Even the changes in house form were much less important than those that occurred in the 1500s. The manufacture of ceramic dishes and cutlery was transformed by factory techniques, but these items represent such small segments of the eighteenth-century economy that it is hard to see how they could have had a revolutionary economic impact. The key industries of the eighteenth century were cloth manufacture and iron and steel production (Landes 1998; Mathias 1988). Carson’s model actually asserts that cloth and clothing became less important status markers at this time, and we know that iron and steel production was much more closely related to military needs than to consumer demand. Carson’s evidence that ordinary people became more interested in the acquisition of consumer goods like those of the rich comes from sermons and other moralizing tracts complaining about the “uppity” behavior of the poor, who no longer knew their place. Since examples of such moralizing could be produced in large numbers for every period of European history, these texts are actually evidence only of their authors’ traditional moral bent and tell us nothing at all about eighteenth-century behavior (Delumeau 1977; Harte 1976; Owst 1961). Complaints about rampant, inappropriate consumption were particularly widespread in Elizabethan England, and they were accompanied by a wide range of capitalist ventures, known at the time as “projects,” designed to meet the demand for such goods as lace, silk stockings, and playing cards (Thirsk 1978). Again, it seems more appropriate to see both changes in consumption and the new style of manufacturing as deriving from intellectual changes begun in the Renaissance.

Nor is it clear that, as Carson asserts, consumer goods did not play a great part in defining social groups before 1650. Medieval people did not use forks or teacups, but they were very conscious of how people used other possessions. Knowing how to ride a horse, for example, was a key element of aristocratic behavior. (It remained so in eighteenth-century America.) And if one objects to use of the horse as an example, on the grounds that it is not a manufactured good, what about the sword? Every medieval gentleman (outside the church) had to own a sword, and his status was judged in part by the style with which he used it. There is certainly a difference between knowing how to ride a horse and use a sword and knowing how to serve tea elegantly, but the difference does not lie in the importance of properly using manufactured goods, which is essential in both systems. As for refined manners, Europeans had believed from at least the time of the Iliad and the earliest Irish sagas that

an aristocrat could be recognized by his behavior no matter how far from home he went, even by people who had no idea of the amount of land he owned. The “courtly love” of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has frequently been seen as a code of behavior that separated the aristocracy from everyone else, since only the aristocrats had the time to learn the complex rules of courtly romance (Elias 1978).

Questions have also been raised about the degree of change that actually took place in the eighteenth century, and many scholars see strong expressions of traditional attitudes well into the nineteenth century. Traditional rural patterns of neighborhood sharing, as expressed in communal activities such as barn raisings and quilting bees, interest-free loans between neighbors, and simple barter exchanges like meat clubs, remained common in the nineteenth century, suggesting that market attitudes and the desire to acquire consumer goods remained second to neighborliness for many people (Henretta 1978; Martin 1984). Amy Friedlander (1991) has argued that in early nineteenth-century New Jersey most farmers continued to use their wealth in a way Carson calls traditional, preferring investment in bigger barns and more livestock over the purchase of consumer goods. Edward Chappell (1994) believes that there was no great change in American housing until after 1800, and traditional building forms remained common in some parts of North America into this century (Glassie 1968; Noble 1984). Studies of bones from archaeological sites suggest that traditional dietary patterns remained entrenched in rural areas in the nineteenth century (Bedell et al. 1994). The recognition that many traditional lifeways endured into the nineteenth century, and that many of the undoubted developments of the eighteenth century were rooted in the Renaissance and the Reformation, turns the “consumer revolution” into a 500-year-long event, and the important changes in the ways eighteenth-century people ate and drank were part of a very slow process, not signs of a sudden social transformation.

The debate about whether there was a rise in consumerism and, if so, whether it was gradual or rapid, sets a clear agenda for archaeological and historical research. If we can identify a period of less than 50 years when great changes took place in the ownership of several different classes of goods—for example, tea sets, forks, chests of drawers, and improved houses—we could plausibly point to that period as one of consumer revolution. If, on the other hand, we find that these changes were gradual, or that rapid changes in the ownership of different consumer goods took place at different periods spread out over centuries, we could argue for slow change. Also, if new consumer goods spread at the same time among different ethnic groups in different parts of colonial North America, we could argue for the existence of a single market and a single culture. If different groups experienced these changes at widely different times, however, or if some groups did not experience them at all, then we must allow that the reach of Anglo-American commercial culture was limited, and that traditional ethnic and community values continued to be of major importance. Obviously, archaeology is not the only way to approach these questions, but it certainly has a part to play in understanding consumerism and its role in the origin of the modern world.

##### 5. *Experimental Research Areas: Women and Workers on the Farm*

Certain topics of great interest to historians have proved elusive for archaeologists. One of them is gender and another is the situation of subordinate workers (servants and slaves) on small and medium-sized farms. The problem with approaching these important topics archaeologically is that

women and servants typically lived in the same households as freemen. We feel lucky when we locate an artifact deposit that we can associate with a particular household; it is almost unheard-of to find a deposit that can be associated with a single person (Deetz 1982). Women, in particular, almost always lived with men. (Even Henrietta Mahoe, who remained a widow for five years after her husband's death, had a male apprentice and perhaps other male servants.) Archaeologists have had some success learning about gender roles from the study of skeletons and grave goods (Rautman 2000), but it has proved difficult to extend this approach to sites of occupation, such as farms. James Gibb and Julia King (1991) had little success when they tried to identify separate areas of men's and women's activity in the yards of seventeenth-century Chesapeake sites. Diana diZerega Wall wrote a book titled *The Archaeology of Gender* (1994), but insofar as her argument deals with differences between women and men, it depends entirely on documentary history. Less than a quarter of her book actually treats archaeological data, and that section is called "The Ritualization of the Family Meal." Archaeologists can study families, but individual people, whether male or female, are rarely visible.

In a few cases archaeologists have identified differences in the artifact assemblages generated by women and those from male-only households. Joyce Clements (1993) studied the living quarters of married and unmarried officers of the early 1800s at Boston's Fort Independence, and she showed that the married households had much larger investments in tea services and such elaborate tablewares as condiment dishes and cream ladles. Clements attributes the difference to the presence of women (see also Klein 1991). One's initial reaction to this interpretation is that Clements is surely right, but how do we know that she is? Is there any reason, other than our knowledge of nineteenth-century social graces, to attribute the teawares to the women? Logically, the variation in artifact assemblages could just as well reflect differences between the households of married and single people, or, assuming the single people were younger, between young people and the middle-aged. If so, is it sexist and Victorian to assume that the women socialized the men, rather than the other way around?

Much of what passes for "feminist archaeology" is similar to Clements's study, in that it extends what is known about male and female roles in modern cultures into the past; the presence of women is recognized from activities that in documented societies are generally carried out by women (Gero and Conkey 1991). Although this approach may often lead us to correct conclusions, it prevents us, almost by definition, from learning anything new about the past through archaeology. For example, Janet Spector (1993) has written at some length about a single artifact recovered from excavations at a Dakota village site in Minnesota. This artifact was a bone awl handle decorated with dots that, according to Dakota elders, a woman would have made to mark the completion of a job such as beading a pair of moccasins. The artifact is fascinating, and Spector is surely right to highlight its connection to women's pride in their work and sense of their own worth. Yet Spector knew what the artifact was only because elderly Dakota women told her. In the absence of such a living or written tradition, we could not have understood the awl handle's connection to women's lives or unraveled the meaning of the dots.

Since we know a great deal from written sources about the lives of women in colonial and early federal America, we will regularly encounter artifacts that speak to us about women's lives in this period. Milk pans remind us of dairying, which was generally women's work (Jensen 1986; Yentsch

1991), needles are associated with sewing, and painted teacups suggest the new civility overtaking entertaining and even the family meal. Bits of clothing and jewelry show something of how women presented themselves to the world. These artifacts have great importance for the educational and enthusiasm-generating functions of archaeology, but how can we learn from them about women in the past? Perhaps this will be extremely difficult when dealing with data from a single site, but explorations of the large-scale patterning in the distribution of such items should show how women's lives changed over time, and may reveal differences in women's experiences that reflect cultural, class, or ethnic differences.

Workers present a similar problem. How can deposits associated with servants or slaves be discerned when the slaves or servants lived in such close association with their masters? Attempts made to date in Delaware to identify such deposits have not been fruitful (Azizi and Pipes 1998). Thomas Dawson's probate inventory shows that he and his wife lived with a "Negro woman called Jenny," and she must have touched many of the objects we found on the site. But we do not know which objects she touched, or whether any of them were considered hers. We know from the tax records that some separate "Negro quarters" did exist in Delaware, but they were not common. Most Delaware slave owners had four or fewer slaves, who lived in their master's house or in kitchen buildings. The discovery of a quarter site would be very valuable, but cannot be counted on. New research techniques will be needed if we are to learn about the lives of Delaware's subordinate workers.

## 6. *Summary*

Other research topics are, of course, possible in the archaeology of rural Delaware, but there are certain commonalities in the approach historical archaeologists have taken to eighteenth-century sites in the state. For all the archaeologists working in the state, the foremost goal has been to reconstruct the lives people lived such a long time ago. The main data sets used for that reconstruction have consistently been house and building remains, farm plans, ceramics, faunal remains, and small finds such as tools and buttons. The household has been the consistent focus of the investigations. Moving beyond the description of individual sites and individual households, archaeologists have looked for other kinds of variations in their data. The most obvious is temporal variation; archaeologists can often tell from a glance at a plowed field what quarter of what century they are dealing with. Other kinds of variation that have been explored are spatial variations, class differences, and ethnic distinctions. The variations and commonalities in the data, once understood, can be used to study the dynamics of the eighteenth-century economy and the workings of its class system, the response of immigrants to their new environment, the development of regional identities in America, the allegedly revolutionary changes in eighteenth-century society, and many other topics not discussed here or even yet imagined.

## C. SIGNIFICANCE AND THE PUBLIC

If a site is significant because it has or may yield "information important in prehistory or history," one question that arises is, to whom is the information important? National Register Criterion D is usually understood to mean information important to scholars, which is a narrow interpretation. What about information that is important to the public, or to particular ethnic or other interest

groups? Some sites that are not good candidates for scholarly research might be excellent candidates for public interpretation, and these sites ought to be given special consideration. One of archaeology's most important functions is to interest people in the past. Many people who are bored by old documents or stories in books are fascinated by actual objects from previous centuries. Archaeologists should embrace and exploit this public enthusiasm. The excavation of colonial sites provides many possibilities for public outreach, and decisions about which sites to excavate should be made with these possibilities in mind.

There are several factors that might make a site a good candidate for interpreting history to the public. One is location. It is easier to attract visitors to a site located on a busy road or in some other heavily trafficked location (such as near the Rehoboth outlet malls or in downtown Wilmington) than to one located in a remote area. A site near a school might provide an opportunity to interest the students in history, perhaps by having the school "adopt" the site. A site located near or composing part of a historic site that already attracts visitors would also work well for the purposes of public interpretation. Most of the farm sites excavated have been in agricultural fields in out-of-the-way places, hardly the best locations for drawing visitors. The Thomas Dawson Site, however, was located on U.S. 13, just south of Dover, and during the six weeks of excavations more than 200 visitors were attracted to the site by a roadside sign, even though the work took place in the middle of winter. A site in a good location for interpretation should perhaps be given special consideration, and be considered significant, even when a similar site in a remote location would not be.

Sites with visually interesting features, such as stone-lined cellar holes, provide good copy for newspapers and television stations and offer something that visitors can relate to. Spectacular or unusual artifacts can also generate interest in a site, and, through the site, interest in history. Weapons, armor, jewelry, and coins, and slate or window glass containing writing, might all work well to foster interest. In promoting public interest in a site, however, care has to be taken to avoid attracting looters, perhaps by delaying publication about the archaeological work until after the most sensitive parts of the site have been excavated. A site associated with a known person or a famous event may also be a good candidate for interpretation; such a site might also be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A or B, however, and would therefore not need to be given special consideration under Criterion D. A site with ethnic affiliations also provides opportunities for interesting members of the same ethnic group.

There are numerous other ways in which an archaeological site can become a vehicle for interpreting history to the public. None of these factors matter, however, if other considerations prevent public access to the site. Some project sponsors forbid contact with the public and the press, and others have historically refused to pay for public interpretation efforts. Some private firms refuse to allow site visitors for liability reasons. These factors are obstacles, but archaeologists should try to overcome them. One way to measure the importance of any scientific discovery is to consider how many lives it touches, and an archaeological site that can make hundreds of people think about the past has a very real significance.

## D. CONSIDERATIONS OF INTEGRITY

### 1. *Definition of Integrity*

To date, all of the eighteenth-century sites excavated in the state have been plowed, except for the William Hawthorn Site, which had been occupied until 1950. An unplowed site without too much later disturbance would be extremely valuable. However, most sites found in the future will probably have been plowed many times.

On a plowed site, integrity means two things: the preservation of distributional information in the plowzone, and the presence of subplowzone features. Because it is hard to know what to make of distributional information without knowing where buildings were located, such information is not in itself adequate for eligibility; the presence of features is essential. No farm or rural dwelling site without subplowzone features can be considered to have archaeological integrity. The presence of intact features, though essential, does not in itself guarantee that a site possesses integrity. To date, the most important data for the interpretation of rural sites in Delaware have come from three kinds of features:

- 1) structural remains, especially house foundations, but also outbuilding remains;
- 2) large, secondary artifact deposits from cellars, wells, and other deep features; and
- 3) landscape features, such as ditches and fencelines.

The presence or absence of these types of features should be the main determinant of a plowed site's integrity. Shallow pits with poorly preserved artifacts, while they sometimes provide useful information, are common, and are not enough to give a site integrity. The Thomas Dawson Site, for example, was initially considered significant on the basis of three features found in Phase II testing. Two of the features turned out to be modern disturbances; the third was an eighteenth-century pit, but it contained only a few, highly fragmentary artifacts (Bedell et al. 2002; Liebknecht et al. 1997). Further work on the site did locate a large cellar hole containing thousands of artifacts, but it is clear, in hindsight, that the initial recommendation, based simply on the fact that features were present, was premature.

As was explained in Chapter III, our knowledge of some aspects of life in eighteenth-century Delaware has progressed to the point where not all additional information will truly improve our understanding. Only a large, well-preserved faunal collection will add to our understanding of diet or stock-raising practices; another poorly preserved collection like those found on most eighteenth-century sites will only confirm what we already know. While it may be useful to further confirm that the main meats in the eighteenth-century diet were beef and pork, supplemented with sheep, chicken, goose, and small wild game (such as turtle, catfish, and squirrel), such confirmation would not be a sufficient justification to declare a site eligible and require the expense of its excavation. Likewise, a common pattern has been identified in the use of ceramics, and another collection deriving from redeposited contexts of mixed dates is not likely to add much to our knowledge. Progress in our knowledge requires well-preserved, tightly dated deposits, and some research topics also require that

the deposits be associated with households of known ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Such deposits should include identifiable ceramic vessels of several different types, identifiable small finds such as buttons, buckles, table knives, or tools, and faunal remains identifiable to the species level.

The residences of very poor people are likely to leave fewer remains than those of the better-off. The occupation span of a poor household's dwelling may be shorter, since poor people were highly mobile. For this reason, and because they had fewer possessions, there will probably be fewer artifacts. The houses of the poor, and any outbuildings, are more likely to have been built in a way that will leave no traces. Yet for many purposes it is essential to have data from sites occupied by the very poor. (For example, for testing the thesis that tea-drinking spread rapidly through all ranks of society.) The criteria for integrity on a site occupied by poor people may therefore be somewhat lower. Heite and Blume (1995:65) even argue that a site consisting of only a surface artifact scatter might be significant if it was occupied by poor people. To this author, an insistence on some artifact deposits and intact subsurface features seems necessary if a site is to be considered significant. What can be learned, after all, from a surface scatter of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century artifacts? Although a site of this type might have some interest as a typical example of what remains from a brief occupation by poor people, it would not contain enough information about the past to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In such cases, Phase III excavation would probably add little to what was learned during the Phase II testing. No matter how great our enthusiasm to learn about the lives of poor people in the past, we cannot learn without data.

It must be pointed out that a site dating, let us say, to the period 1750 to 1830, and containing intact features, will not necessarily have retained any integrity for the 1750 to 1770 period. It is common for the major artifact deposits on a site to be found in wells or cellars filled in near the end of the site's occupation period. For example, the Augustine Creek South Site was occupied from the 1720s until about 1760, but all of the major artifact deposits seemed to date to the 1750s. The major deposits at the William Strickland Plantation, Bloomsbury, and Darrach Store sites also dated primarily to the later years of occupation at the sites. The buildings on these sites may date to their earliest periods, but not necessarily; on most sites it has proved quite difficult to date the construction of the buildings, and those we uncover might not have been the first on the site. Before archaeologists argue that a site with a long occupation period is significant because of the information it will provide about the early years of its history, they must show that deposits or structures dating to that early period are extant on the site.

## 2. *Determining Integrity*

To determine whether a rural site has integrity by these standards requires extensive testing at the Phase II level. Enough of the site must be exposed to determine whether features of the important types are present, which will typically require the use of machinery. Pennsylvania guidelines suggest that about 40 percent of a plowed site be exposed at the Phase II level (Bureau for Historic Preservation 1991:35). Forty percent is a large figure, but some substantial degree of machine work will usually be essential. Test units comprising a one percent sample of the Augustine Creek North Site were excavated without locating any features, but the clearing of 4-foot-wide strips across the site with a backhoe quickly uncovered a cellar hole. Machine work should generally follow some

degree of plowzone sampling, and as much plowzone data as possible should be preserved for possible data recovery. To achieve this balance it may be necessary to use a staged approach: if the first small area of machine-stripping does not uncover substantial features, then more plowzone may need to be sampled by hand excavation so that the machine work may be extended.

Once uncovered, features must be tested to determine whether they contain significant information. Such feature testing will have to be flexible. Sometimes only a small excavation will be enough to judge a feature's potential; for example, a 50x50-centimeter unit in one pit feature at the Thomas Dawson Site yielded numerous artifacts and well-preserved bone, including fish scales, demonstrating the feature's importance. On the other hand, a negative result from the first small test in a large feature does not necessarily indicate that the feature has no importance. The first 1x1-meter tests in the cellar hole at the Thomas Dawson house and in the early cellar at the McKean/Cochran Farm yielded few artifacts, although both features later proved to contain rich deposits. If the eligibility of a site remains in doubt after the first round of limited feature testing, additional testing may be appropriate.

The testing of an unplowed site would necessarily be different. Unplowed soils may contain fragile remains, such as traces of brick piers or other shallow foundations, that would be destroyed by machine excavation. However, enough work must be done on an unplowed site to evaluate its potential; just being unplowed would not necessarily make the site eligible for listing in the National Register. The preferred alternative would be extensive hand excavation. Such testing would be quite expensive, however, and it might sometimes be necessary to do some machine stripping. When machine stripping is necessary, it should be done very carefully and with close monitoring, and archaeologists should probe in front of the machine for foundations and similar remains.

#### E. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a site must possess integrity. To determine whether a site is eligible as a scholarly resource, under Criterion D, three additional factors are most important:

- 1) the degree of integrity;
- 2) the date of the site; and
- 3) the identity of the occupants.

A definition of integrity is given above. Dating criteria are straightforward; the earlier the site, the more important it is. Sites from before 1750, with any degree of integrity, will have a presumptive claim to eligibility. Sites dating to after about 1790 should be more carefully evaluated, and only those with a high degree of integrity or an unusual affiliation, as discussed below, should be considered eligible. In terms of the state plan periodization, the eligibility criteria should be stricter for the 1770 to 1830 period than for 1730 to 1770.

The relevance of the site's occupants in a consideration of National Register eligibility requires further discussion. To date, most of the excavated sites in Delaware, especially those that date before 1770, have been the homes of middle-class or upper-middle-class white farmers. No sites representing the very poor, the very rich, or African Americans have been excavated. (The Augustine Creek North Site, which may have been occupied by poor blacks, was only partially excavated.) Many questions of interest to archaeologists can be answered only by comparing sites occupied by different groups, especially different ethnic or socioeconomic groups. Because the elite are represented by preserved historic sites such as the Dickinson Plantation, residences of poor people would have high priority. A documented slave quarter site would also have high priority, as would a site occupied by free blacks or other minorities. One farm site occupied by American Indians (Bloomsbury) has been excavated, but this single site hardly exhausts the possibilities in the study of this group, and other such sites would continue to have high priority. Because of its interest for the study of gender, the documented residence of a widow or other single woman should also be given high priority, but only if her occupation can be clearly associated with identified structures and deposits.

The identification of sites occupied by minority groups or woman-headed households requires careful historical research. In general, archaeologists working in Delaware have supported their determinations of eligibility with complete title searches and other documentation, and this practice should be continued. Sites whose occupants cannot be conclusively identified should be considered for eligibility as if they had been occupied by European Americans.

1. *European-American Farm and Rural Dwelling Sites, 1730-1770*

A farm or rural dwelling site dating to the 1730 to 1770 period, either known to have been occupied by European Americans or with unknown occupants, should be considered eligible if it possesses a moderate degree of integrity. As a general rule, an eligible site of this type and period should have integrity in at least two of the three key areas noted above: house foundations or other substantial architectural information; fences, ditches, or other good evidence of site landscape; and large, well-preserved artifact deposits. The residence of very poor European-American people could be considered eligible with a somewhat lower degree of integrity.

If the site was also a workshop, substantial and identifiable remains of craft activity would support eligibility. Identification of craft activity could come either from historical research, as at the Augustine Creek South Site, or from archaeological discoveries, as with the shoemaker at Bloomsbury. Documentary evidence alone is not sufficient to merit consideration in this category, however, since it does not guarantee that corresponding archaeological evidence of craft activity will be found.

A site from a part of the state where there have been no excavations, such as the cypress swamp zone in southwestern Kent County, might have additional value because of its location. It has not been determined whether the cypress swamp region belonged to the Delaware Valley culture area, as defined in this document, and it may have been more similar to the Chesapeake region or a transitional zone between the two. Other regions of particular geographic interest may be defined in the future.

The presence of substantial documentation about the resident household of a farm or rural dwelling site of this period, such as might be provided by a will or estate records, would increase the value of the site. The presence of a well would also increase the site's value, since the lower reaches of the well (which probably could not be tested at the Phase II level) might contain preserved organic remains or deeply buried artifact deposits. Special consideration should also be given to sites with great interpretive potential or a high public interest, provided that the means and opportunities for public outreach exist.

## 2. *European-American Farm and Rural Dwelling Sites, 1770-1830*

Because written records are more plentiful and sites are more common, the application of the eligibility criteria should be stricter for sites dating to after 1770. A farm or rural dwelling site of this later period should be considered eligible for listing in the National Register only if it has a high degree of integrity. As a general principle, an eligible site of this type and period should have integrity in all three key areas: house foundations or other substantial architectural information; fences, ditches, or other good evidence of site landscape; and large, well-preserved artifact deposits. Of course, exceptional remains in any one area could make a site eligible, as could other exceptional characteristics. A site known to have been occupied by very poor people could be considered eligible with a somewhat lower degree of integrity.

If the site was also a workshop, substantial, identifiable remains of craft activity would support eligibility. The presence of substantial documentation about the resident household would increase the value of the site. For this period the available documentation is generally much richer than for earlier times, so a site would need to be quite well documented to be eligible on that basis. Exceptional documentation might include a detailed Orphans' Court assessment, a Chancery Court dispute about the property, family papers, or estate papers that include an inventory and list expenses from the estate. If a tenant family can be identified and documented by census, probate, or other records, this information would be valuable, because less is known about tenant households. The presence of a well would also increase the site's value, since the lower reaches of the well (which probably could not be tested at the Phase II level) might contain preserved organic remains or deeply buried artifact deposits. A site from a part of the state where there have been no excavations (such as the cypress swamp zone of southwestern Kent County) might have additional value because of its location. Special consideration should also be given to sites with great interpretive potential or a high public interest, provided that the means and opportunities for public outreach exist.

## 3. *African American, Native American, or Widow-Occupied Farm and Rural Dwelling Sites, 1730-1830*

The excavation of sites occupied by minority households is crucial for considering several important research questions, and very few such sites dating to before 1830 have been found in the state. A site occupied by a woman-headed household would also have great interest for the study of gender, and no site satisfying this description has been found in the state. Such sites would therefore have high priority and could be considered for eligibility with a lower degree of integrity than those occupied by white, male-headed households. Still, in order to be useful at all, a site occupied by a minority or woman-headed household would have to contain a substantial amount of information,

including, probably, integrity in at least one of the three key areas: house foundations or other substantial architectural information; fences, ditches, or other good evidence of site landscape; and large, well-preserved artifact deposits. If a site does not contain large, well-preserved artifact deposits, it must still yield enough artifacts to securely date the occupation and give some indication of its character.

Archaeological criteria for identifying minority-occupied sites have not been developed and may never be. Therefore, the identification of sites in this category continues to depend on written records. Only those sites for which occupation by a minority or woman-headed household can be documented can be considered in this category. Determination of the ethnic identity of the householders may require genealogical research, as at Bloomsbury, because documents naming property owners or tenants may not always identify their ethnicity.

Special consideration should also be given to sites with great interpretive potential or a high public interest, provided that the means and opportunities for public outreach exist.

#### 4. *Slave Quarter Sites, 1730-1830*

No slave quarter site has been archaeologically identified in Delaware. Tax records mention several “Negro quarters,” telling us that such sites did exist, but they do not seem to have been common. The written records for the study of slave life in Delaware are poor (Williams 1996), and archaeological evidence of slave life would be very valuable. Slave quarter sites would therefore have high priority and could be considered for eligibility with a lower degree of integrity than farm sites that were occupied by white, male-headed households. Still, a slave quarter site would have to contain a substantial amount of information, including, probably, integrity in at least one of the three key areas: house foundations or other substantial architectural information; fences, ditches, or other good evidence of site landscape; and large, well-preserved artifact deposits. A site that does not contain large, well-preserved artifact deposits must still yield enough artifacts to securely date the occupation and give some indication of its character.

Slave quarters were sometimes located at a distance from the owner’s dwelling, and any such sites would certainly fit into this property type. On southern plantations slave quarters can sometimes be identified by their locations; a row of small dwellings behind a plantation house, for example, can be assumed to have been slave residences. In Delaware, the identification of a small site as a slave residence is likely to depend at least in part on documentary research. A difficulty with the archaeology of slavery in Delaware is that slave owners had four or fewer slaves, and slaves in such households probably lived in close proximity to their owners. It is difficult in such cases to identify features or deposits that can be convincingly identified with the slaves. If an outbuilding on a large farm site can be identified as a slave residence, the site could be considered significant for its ability to contribute to our knowledge of the lives of enslaved African Americans.

Special consideration should also be given to sites with great interpretive potential or a high public interest, provided that the means and opportunities for public outreach exist.